
ISSUE 6

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NEW TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION - AUGUST 2, 1996

TRANSITION FROM CURRENT TO NEW SYSTEM

Beginning August 2, 1996, expense reimbursement requests for domestic, foreign, one-day, and off-continent (Alaska and Hawaii) travel will be entered on-line. On-line entry will be required of all employees and contractors located in Los Alamos as well as those employees stationed off-site who are requesting reimbursement. Affiliate and relocation expenses will continue to be submitted via hard copy and entered by the Travel staff.

To ensure a smooth transition from the current system to the new, travel expenses for past trips should be submitted to Travel by July 26 in order to be processed before implementation. Hard copy expense worksheets not received by this date will have to be entered and approved on-line in the new system. Travel will be available to assist anyone who may experience difficulties during this transition.

DEACTIVATION OF CURRENT SYSTEM

Effective July 29, 1996 at 5:00 p.m. the ability to enter Travel Requests on-line (the STR option on the current Travel System), will be deactivated. Travel Requests entered into the current system that have not had expenses processed against them will require post approval at the time of on-line submission. This will be required because the approvals entered in the old system cannot be recognized by the new system. If there are emergency Travel Requests that must be entered before implementation of the new system, please contact the travel office at 7-4090 and we will be happy to assist you.

Background/Overview of System

In response to customer feedback and budgetary requirements, the new Travel Reimbursement System was developed to provide a faster, more automated method of reimbursing travelers for their travel expenses. With the new system, travelers will enter their expenses on-line instead of onto a paper form. Because the system will identify unusual or irregular expenses, the Claims Processors will only need to audit expenses that exceed certain limits. Random audits will still be performed.

Approvals

Because travelers will be able to request on-line approval when they enter their expenses, Travel Requests will be eliminated. The new system will allow managers to approve travel either before or after the trip. If managers prefer pre-trip approval, they can require their employees to submit an on-line estimate for approval. If the estimate is exceeded or pre approval is not obtained, the system will automatically route the expense report for the manager's approval after the expenses have been entered. Just as with the current system, approval will be required before travelers will be reimbursed for their expenses.

Employees who currently have delegated authority to enter travel or approvals in the current system will have the same authority in the new system. Managers will not have to re-delegate authority for their employees.

Receipt Requirements/Submission

Even though expenses are entered on-line, the traveler must submit a signed copy of the printed expense report and receipts to Travel before reimbursement. According to Internal Revenue Service regulations regarding "accountable plans," travelers must account to their employer with certain receipts for any travel reimbursement. If receipts are not submitted, thereby not meeting the requirements of the "accountable plan," the employer is required to add any travel payments to the employee's W-2 form.

IRS audits can occur up to six years after the travel. By submitting receipts to Travel, the traveler will be relieved of the necessity of maintaining files for this period of time.

Travel will also be able to perform random audits without having to burden the traveler for additional information.

Hardware Requirements

The new Travel System can be accessed from any site that connects to the Lab's computer infrastructure using an ICN password or a smartcard. LANL travelers using the Travel System must have access to either a PC with a minimum of 486 SX processor, 20MB disk space, and 16 MB Ram or a Macintosh with a 68030 or higher processor, 15MB disk space and 24 MB Ram.

Faster Turnaround of Reimbursement

With the new system, reimbursement turnaround time will decrease from the current one-two weeks to one-two days from the time receipts are received in Travel. Travelers will continue to receive checks for their reimbursement until Phase II of the system is implemented.

PHASE II - Direct Deposit/Payment to Diner's Club

In response to customer requests, Travel will be implementing Phase II of the new Travel System in November 1996. Once Phase II is implemented, travelers will have the following reimbursement options available: 1) reimbursement deposited directly to their bank account, 2) reimbursement split between payment to the traveler's Diners Club account and bank account deposit or check 3) reimbursement by check as in the current system. The direct deposit/direct payment option will be especially helpful to off-site employees.

If there are any questions regarding the new system, please call Lisa Cisneros at 7-4314, Lori Hicks at 5-8530 or Henrietta Trujillo at 7-7949.